



CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY

L'INSTITUT CANADIEN DU
DROIT ET DE LA POLITIQUE
DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

For Immediate Release

CIELAP's new report highlights needed changes in Ontario's aggregates management policies and legislation

TORONTO – 22 March 2011 - The Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP) today releases its report *Aggregate Extraction in Ontario: A Strategy for the Future*. The report assesses key issues and makes recommendations that Ontario should address in a long-term management strategy for the extraction of aggregates (sand, gravel and stone).

“Ontario has made progress over the years in mitigating environmental and social impacts of aggregate extraction but there is a lot of room for improvement”, states Matt Binstock, the report’s primary author. “The province now needs to honour its commitment to develop a long-term aggregates strategy. This strategy should reduce the demand for aggregates while striking a balance between minimizing social and environmental impacts and supporting the economic benefits involved.”

Substantial population growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region of Ontario over the next two decades is expected to raise the demand for aggregates. Ontario has traditionally relied heavily on aggregates extracted from pits and quarries located close to where they are used in order to minimize transportation costs. However, urban growth and new restrictions on where new pits and quarries can be located (including the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt plans) have made the approval of new operations increasingly challenging. Proposals for new pits and quarries are often met with public resistance. Aggregates extraction is a polarized issue in Ontario and a strong aggregate resources strategy that aims to balance different needs and interests would help the province enormously. In 2007, Ontario’s Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) told the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario that it was committed to contributing to such a strategy.

CIELAP’s report contains a number of recommendations on various aspects of aggregate resource management, from compliance issues to transportation. Highlights include:

- The need for MNR to hire additional field inspectors to enforce the *Aggregate Resources Act*. There is a current lack of adequate staff capacity dating back to staff cuts in the mid-1990s.
- The need to tighten requirements for the rehabilitation of former pits and quarries, and consider changes in how rehabilitation is funded.
- The need to increase the use of alternatives to aggregate in construction, such as recycled concrete and industrial by-products.
- The need for more detailed data on how aggregates are transported and used to help decision-makers ensure the use of better practices and more effective demand management in the future.

For further information please contact:

Matt Binstock, CIELAP: 647-309-8020; matt@cielap.org

The executive summary and full report are available at www.cielap.org

Founded in 1970, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP) is an independent environmental law and policy research and education organization.